

6½ years in the appropriations process, serving as minority clerk for the Interior Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee as well as staff assistant for the Treasury-Postal and Transportation-Treasury Subcommittees in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, the responsibilities of these positions were enormous, and Kurt carried out those responsibilities with the utmost professionalism, dedication, and intelligence. Most recently, Kurt reviewed the budget requests and oversaw financial management of the Department of the Treasury, the General Services Administration, and the National Archives and Records Administration. Congress appropriates over \$18 billion annually for those programs. And we did that each year counting on Kurt's expertise and recommendations. Kurt oversaw some of our Nation's highest priority programs, including those related to the tracking of terrorist financing and money laundering. His analysis and support were critical not only in providing for timely construction of Federal buildings in general, but also for renovation of the National Archives Rotunda, which recently reopened to the public. His service to the Nation and to the Committee on Appropriations will be sorely missed.

But anyone who knew Kurt would tell you that his dedication and hard work for the American people were only part of the story. His accomplishments include not one but three master's degrees—one in science, one in business, and one in history. He was a voracious reader, and a student of history. Kurt was just as comfortable discussing campaigns of the Peloponnesian War or riptides as he was going over Treasury Department balance sheets. And when his coworkers would express interest in a subject, Kurt would often give them a book from his personal collection to help spread the knowledge he had already attained. He was a true Renaissance man.

But most importantly, Kurt was a man of kindness, decency, and integrity. Generous to a fault, he was loved not only by his family, but also by his colleagues on the Hill who worked with him each day. His gentle demeanor, sense of fairness, and civility to all serve as an inspiration to those of us who work in the cauldron of ideas and passions we call Congress. We need more people like Kurt Dodd in the congressional community, to remind us that fairness, courtesy, and respect can get a lot more accomplished than posturing, arguing, and gamesmanship.

Sadly, Kurt's mobility, and ultimately his life, was cut short by multiple sclerosis. He suffered this terrible, degenerative disease for several years with great dignity, Mr. Speaker, continuing to perform his duties on the committee with extraordinary skill and dedication.

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day for the Appropriations Committee. The American people have lost a dedicated public servant; his family has lost a loved one; and his colleagues in the government have lost a dear friend. I ask all Members to join me today in celebrating the life of Kurt Dodd and the example of hard work and professionalism he left for us to follow.

A TRIBUTE TO COMMITTEE STAFF DIRECTORS

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 7, 2003

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, on July 17, 2003 our distinguished former colleague, Lee Hamilton, delivered an address to the U.S. Capitol Historical Society's dinner honoring the staff directors of committees of the House of Representatives.

The tribute to the directors was well deserved. They toil long hours and under great stress and pressure to ensure that the House of Representatives operates properly. Mr. Hamilton's remarks are also insightful as to the need for civility in the conduct of our often contentious business. Equally important is the need to respect and to follow the complex Congressional processes and procedures for deliberating the decisions that affect our nation.

I encourage others to read Mr. Hamilton's insightful and instructive remarks on how we conduct our nation's business, and I join him in honoring the hard work and dedication of the staff directors of the U.S. House of Representatives.

A TRIBUTE TO COMMITTEE STAFF DIRECTORS

(By the Hon. Lee H. Hamilton)

The contributions of staff directors to the work of the Congress are immeasurable. I am reasonably confident that every committee chairman and ranking member would say they simply could not do their work without your leadership. I hope that gives each of you a full measure of satisfaction.

I want to talk for a few minutes about the role of the Congress in this country, the importance of politicians, and why your efforts are so important and worthwhile.

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD CONGRESS

You are, of course, familiar with those who are cynical about your work and the work of Congress. The brightest wits in American life have had their fun at the expense of the Congress. H.L. Mencken said that, "with the right pressure, Congressmen would cheerfully be in favor of polygamy, astrology or cannibalism." Mark Twain said, "suppose you were an idiot, and suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself." Will Rogers said that, "Congress was a never-ending source of amusement, amazement, and discouragement." Even so, we honor him with that magnificent statue just off the House floor.

We have all seen surveys like those showing that 66 percent of Americans can name the hosts of various game shows, while only 6 percent can name the Speaker of the House. When I was a member, I was never particularly disturbed by such survey results. After all, Americans are busy people with many demands on their time, and it is not easy to put in a full day's work and then read an article about Congress or turn on C-Span to watch the House or Senate in session.

Nor was I bothered by the barbs—after all, we have to appreciate that the bashing of Congress is one of America's all time favorite indoor sports. What did bother me, though, was the extent to which people do not understand or appreciate some of the basic concepts that underlie the workings of the Congress, and the role that Congress plays in the life of our representative democracy. Even if Americans don't know the

name of their senators or representative, they should know something about the importance of what they do to make the country work. Even if they don't know the players or the details of the legislative process, they should know something about how they relate to our system of government. If too many Americans get those concepts wrong, it does matter to the health of our democracy.

ROLE OF THE CONGRESS AND COMMITTEES

In my experience, far too few Americans really understand the most important function of the Congress. It is not, in my view, to pass any particular piece of legislation, or even a budget—but its historic mission is to maintain freedom.

The great phrases ring through our history—"We the people," "consent of the governed," "a more perfect union." These aren't just technical terms of political science. They are words that embody America's civic faith. You and I, above all others, are expected to know them in our bones, and to apply these grand concepts.

We rely on elected representatives to identify, sort out, and solve the difficult issues of state. It did not have to be this way. Our country would be vastly different if the Founders had placed power in the hands of a single ruler, or given much less voice to the American people.

In the Congress, Americans have a forum for debate and deliberation in which they can feel a stake. Traditional lawmaking is not just a nicety—it's a necessity if we're to remain a democracy. The lawmaking process allows us to resolve differences, and to live together peacefully, productively and successfully.

Most Americans may be familiar with the diagram of how a bill becomes a law. Whenever I see those charts I think to myself how sterile they are. They do not convey the dynamics—the frustration, the excitement, the complexity and the necessity of the process. Very few Americans understand that the details of this process of deliberation guarantee that their voices are heard, and freedom is protected.

I worry that astute legislators often bypass steps in the lawmaking process, arguing—in effect—that the ends justify the means. This "unconventional lawmaking" is increasingly applied to important legislation; but in doing this we bypass and put at risk the very democratic process that defines our system.

My view is that important proposals should not bypass the traditional process, including the committee review, because that is one important place where deliberation takes place. That's where members and staff can ask the hard questions. Committees provide expertise, and an opportunity to consider the merits and smooth out the problems in proposals. This is where we build consensus.

Some Americans feel that the legislative procedure is too slow and deliberative—they are annoyed by what they perceive as inside-the-Beltway scuffling, and wonder why Congress can't get things done faster. But do we really want a speedy system in which laws are pushed through before alternatives are considered and consensus developed? We misunderstand Congress's role if we demand it be a model of efficiency and quick action.

Our Founders designed a system in which all new proposals get careful scrutiny by going through many layers of review. They were far less interested in moving good ideas efficiently, than they were in preventing bad ideas from becoming the law of the land in the heat of the moment. People may sometimes complain about the process, but they benefit from its legislative speed bumps when they want their views heard, their interests protected, and their rights safeguarded. As former Speaker Sam Rayburn

used to say: "One of the wisest things ever said was, 'Wait a minute.'" That, in a phrase, is the essential role played by congressional committees.

IMPORTANCE OF POLITICIANS

Democracy, after all, is a process, not a product, and what our democracy really needs is more politicians. That was one line I used to say that was sure to get a reaction. Very few of my constituents agreed.

Showing skill as a politician has come to mean demonstrating the ability to raise campaign funds, engaging in the tit-for-tat of negative advertising, jockeying for public support based on polls and focus groups, or skewering an opponent with a one-liner during a televised debate. People have come to view the word politician—particularly with regard to the Congress—with disdain. Plenty of voters feel that politicians sell-out their beliefs and promises. "Stick to your guns," they urge.

Controversy and conflict are unavoidable in a nation as large and diverse as ours—a diversity that is rightly represented in the peoples' House. To avoid ripping apart at the seams, our country needs people who know how to accommodate different points of view and work for common solutions—it needs politicians.

You are an essential part of this effort. By working behind the scenes, knowing what Members want, proposing compromises, addressing all the difficult details of legislation, and dealing with all the worthy groups wanting contradictory things, you—as well as your bosses—have to be politicians in order to keep our democracy running.

BEING A GOOD POLITICIAN

For the most part, people don't pay attention to how their hopes, dreams and ambitions are turned into public policy through the lawmaking process. Most citizens and journalists take that very political process for granted. They shouldn't.

Constituents often asked my position on a substantive issue. I don't think anyone inquired about my political skills—and, in this world, political skills are essential to get things done. The key to being an effective legislator or staffer is respecting that system and figuring out how to make it work. So what political skills do you need—what skills does a member need?

First, you know how to consult, particularly with your colleagues—talking to them, listening to them, making sure they feel they are in the loop. Support for ideas is largely built one-on-one, but also in larger forums. Key individuals—inside and outside of the Congress—have their own ideas and valid concerns, and they expect to be able to share them. Lyndon Johnson had his own way of putting this with a sign he had in his Senate office: "You ain't learning nothing when you're talking."

Second, you calm—rather than inflame—discussions of controversial issues. Things can get pretty heated in the Congress, and disagreement is inevitable in a House as large and diverse as ours. It is relatively easy to make a bad situation worse. One thing that I'm certain of is that you cannot produce good legislation in a bad atmosphere. You can produce heat in such an environment, but not light.

Third, you know how to persuade. It takes an enormous amount of persuasion to build a majority in support of an idea. You all know how much persuasion is involved in getting approval of even a modest piece of legislation. You have to line up support and be in touch with sometimes hundreds of individuals from both parties, in the Congress and outside the Congress.

Fourth, you must be willing to share credit. I remember former Speaker Tip O'Neill

putting his arm around me and giving me some advice as we walked down the hall. "Neil," he said—he called me Neil for my first decade in Congress because I reminded him of a Boston baseball player named Neil Hamilton. "Neil, you can accomplish anything in this town if you're willing to let someone else take the credit."

Finally, you know how to compromise. Compromise is essential to producing law in our system. Good politicians, both legislators and staff, are able to find points of agreement that will allow a consensus to emerge. They will look for solutions that allow both sides to claim, if not victory, at least some gains.

Your skills are crucial in finding acceptable solutions. Compromise might involve altering some key words; phrasing in a change; inserting a new provision; requiring a study; splitting differences in funding; delaying or postponing implementation of a section. You have to seek these accommodations among rival interests because you know that it is necessary to make the Congress—and country—work.

From my perspective, the ability to build consensus is probably the most important single skill needed in the Congress—by Members and staff. Any fool can blow a meeting or discussion apart—it takes real political skill to bring people together. That is why we need more politicians of your skill these days, not fewer.

WHY IS IT WORTHWHILE?

Well, is this demanding, tedious process of passing legislation worthwhile? You and I know well the frustrations:

As a member, I always felt it was hard to keep on the right side of the voter. When I was in my district, I heard complaints that I wasn't spending enough time in Washington; when I was in Washington, people said I was ignoring the home folks and only paid attention to them during elections. When I drove an old car in my district, people said it looked like something a farmer would use for hauling trash; when I got a new car, they said the lobbyists had gotten to me. When I wore an old suit, people said I had no class; when I wore a new one, I was accused of going high-hat. When I missed church, people said I was an atheist; when I attended church, I was a pious fraud, trolling for votes in church. When Congress passed a lot of laws, we were a meddlesome Congress; when we weren't passing laws, we were an incompetent, do-nothing Congress ignoring the needs of the country. When we supported the president, people said we were a rubber-stamp; when we opposed the president, we were disloyal and obstructionist.

You can never please everyone when you are working in Congress, no matter how many hours you put in, no matter how skillful you are. You all know too well what I'm talking about as staff directors when I talk about the frustrations, among them:

- committee meetings go on without end;
- the work is tedious, requiring that you go over legislation comma by comma;
- you are constantly running from one meeting or appointment to another
- your daily schedule is always being interrupted, revised, or simply scrapped.
- if you have a family, you're going to miss many important family events;
- and you cannot plan ahead, whether for an evening off or for a vacation, because some event or emergency always demands that Congress stay in session longer than planned.

All the political posturing, sniping and scrambles to claim credit for good things—or avoid blame for bad—sometimes becomes disheartening, as does the constant maneuvering for partisan advantage. And for put-

ting up with all of this, you get paid less than you could make in the private sector, while facing harsh and frequent criticism.

Yet, despite it all, most members run for reelection and remain in Congress as long as they can. Most of you worked long and hard to become a committee staff director.

Is it all worthwhile? Yes, of course it is. Why? Let's be frank—some of it satisfies the ego. Some like the power and the trappings of power—when you speak, people listen, and that is very satisfying; but most of you, I think, are truly motivated by the belief that, as hard as it is, you can make a difference and enhance the lives of ordinary Americans.

Then, too, it is all pretty exciting—and interesting. The sheer challenge of public policy issues attracts us. There is a pervasive sense on Capitol Hill that it is where the issues of greatest importance to the nation are being sorted out. This is where the action is. Sometimes this is misplaced, but often it is not.

You struggle over the issues that aroused the passions of this country's founding generation. How much power should the federal government be given? How should powers be separated among the branches? How do we resolve the tension between encouraging individual liberty and security? What role should our country play in the world?

These great issues are subject to debate every time a new federal budget comes to a vote, or a major presidential initiative gets introduced on Capitol Hill. When you start working in Congress, you get a chance to take part in this ongoing debate—our great experiment with democracy.

Your public service gives you a stimulating, proud and lively career. So I salute each of you for the vital role that you play within this institution, and in your service to your fellow Americans. You are contributing to the success and direction of this country. I hope you feel that by working in the Congress you are given the unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people and the great affairs of this nation. I would wager that no matter where your career takes you from Capitol Hill, you will look back on your public service as the most rewarding of your career.

The work is hard, the recognition rare, the monetary reward modest; but your reward is a deeply fulfilling life in public service and a key role in American democracy. What more could you want?

HONORING SIX BRAVE BRENTWOOD POLICE OFFICERS AS TOP COPS

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 7, 2003

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate six courageous police officers from the Brentwood, Tennessee, Police Department for receiving this year's National Association of Police Organization's TOP COPS Award. The six police officers are Stephanie Bellis Warner, Tommy Walsh, Jim Campbell, Tommy Campsey, Richard Hickey and Steve Walling.

On May 6, 2003, their heroic and selfless actions prevented a number of innocent bystanders from getting hurt during the pursuit of a bank robbery suspect. Officer Warner caught up with the suspect at a busy intersection and was engaged in a brief gun battle. She was wounded during the exchange, as